The Role of English in the Linguistic Landscapes of Finnish Shopping Centers

A Comparative Study Between Helsinki and Oulu

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Tämä tutkielma keskittyy englannin kielen rooliin kahden suomalaisen kauppakeskuksen kielimaisemissa esimerkiksi kauppojen ikkunoissa, mainoksissa ja muissa kylteissä. Tutkimuskohteina ovat Mall of Tripla Helsingissä ja Kauppakeskus Valkea Oulussa. Vaikka englannin on toistuvasti osoitettu olevan tärkein vieras kieli suomalaisille, erityisesti Tripla on saanut osakseen kritiikkiä englannin kielen käytöstään. Tutkimuskohteita vertailemalla pyritään selvittämään erityisesti, miten englannin kieltä käytetään ja mikä funktio sillä on näissä kielimaisemissa.

Tutkielma nojaa vahvasti kielimaisemien (*linguistic landscapes*) teoriaan, joka tutkimussuuntana yhdistää kielitiedettä eri tieteenaloihin, kuten politiikkaan, maantieteeseen ja sosiologiaan. Kielimaisemien tutkimukset keskittyvät perinteisesti kirjoitettuun kieleen kaupungeissa esiintyvissä erilaisissa kylteissä. Kun otetaan huomioon tämän tutkimuksen kaupalliset tutkimuskohteet, on tärkeää tarkastella myös englannin kielen käyttöä mainonnassa. Lisäksi kielen asema sekä Suomessa että maailmalla on tärkeä pohja analyysille ja auttaa selittämään sen roolia paremmin.

Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin valokuvaamalla kauppakeskuksista kaikki kyltit, joissa esiintyi englannin kieltä. Lopullinen aineisto muodostui 349 kuvan kokoelmaksi. Analyysissä sovellettiin aiempien kielimaisematutkimusten käyttämää kategorisointimenetelmää, joka tässä tutkimuksessa keskittyi kylteissä esiintyviin kieliin, kielten funktioihin ja kylttien multimodaalisiin ominaisuuksiin.

Tutkimuksen perusteella voidaan tunnistaa englannin kielen vahva läsnäolo molemmissa kohteissa. Suurimmassa osassa aineistoa kylteillä esiintyi ainoastaan englannin kieltä, mutta monikielisissä kylteissä näkyi suomen ja englannin lisäksi myös ruotsia, venäjää, italiaa, espanjaa ja thaita. Monikielisissä kylteissä hyödynnettiin sekä käännöksiä että kielten sekoittamista. Kielen valinnan, kylttien asettelun sekä materiaalien havaittiin olevan yhteydessä joko symboliseen tai viittaavaan funktioon, joka nousi suurimmaksi eroksi kohteiden välillä. Viittaava englannin käyttö oli hieman yleisempää Triplassa kuin Oulussa, jossa taas englannin symbolinen rooli korostui.

Tulosten perusteella voidaan päätellä, että kohdeyleisöjen oletetuissa kielitaidoissa on eroja Helsingin ja Oulun välillä. Symbolinen kielenkäyttö nojautuu erilaisiin arvoihin ja stereotypioihin, joita englannin kieleen ja englanninkielisiin paikkoihin usein liitetään. Nämä arvot välittyvät yleisölle, vaikka kielitaito olisi heikompaa. Viittaava kielenkäyttö taas näkyy kylteissä, joiden tehtävänä on informoida asiakkaita. Viittaavat kyltit vaativat lukijaltaan edistyneempää kielitaitoa, koska viestin ymmärtäminen on tärkeämpää kuin sen herättämät mielikuvat. Tulokset osoittavat, että kohdeyleisön oletetaan osaavan englantia paremmin Helsingissä kuin Oulussa.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords

Kielimaisema, sosiolingvistiikka, englannin kieli, kauppakeskukset, kielitaito

Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited

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1. Introduction

The opening of Mall of Tripla in Helsinki in 2019 unleashed a wave of backlash on social media because of the perceived ridiculous and unnecessary use of English in naming practices (Rantavaara, 2019; Paananen and Palonen, 2019; Vesikansa, 2019). Floors are called "Souls Streets" and "Little Manhattan", and the shopping center itself is "Mall of Tripla" instead of just "Tripla", which made people question the state and vitality of Finnish (Vesikansa, 2019). Yet, at the same time, studies show that English is the most important foreign language in Finland. According to Leppänen et al. (2011), the majority tend to have positive attitudes towards English and consider it more important than Swedish. In fact, English is even being compared to a third language in Finland (Kääntä, Leppänen and Nikula, 2008; Leppänen et al., 2011). Considering the positive attitudes, why was there so much critical backlash when the Tripla shopping center opened?

This study's goal is to gain a better understanding of the linguistic landscapes of Finnish shopping centers. The focus is on English both within and outside the capital area. Though foreign language proficiency in Finland is generally considered up to a high standard, regional differences persist as people living in rural areas report a considerably lower number of encounters with English when compared to encounters in cities (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 63). People who report not encountering foreign languages tend to be less educated, older and live outside cityscapes (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 63). They are also people who might experience inequality in society and the feeling of being left out due to a lack of English language skills (Kääntä, Leppänen and Nikula, 2008, p. 425). Further regional differences arise in a demographic sense. In 2019, 7 per cent of the Finnish population spoke something other than Finnish or Swedish as their mother tongue (City of Helsinki, 2019). In Helsinki, the same number was 16 per cent of population (City of Helsinki, 2019), while in Oulu, for example, the share of foreign language speakers was only 3 per cent (Official Statistics of Finland, 2018). This is almost half of the country average and less than a third from Helsinki. However, Oulu is being referred to as the capital of Northern Scandinavia (City of Oulu, 2019), and is a major technological hub which entails international connections. This creates an interesting juxtaposition of Oulu's perceived global status and a predominantly Finnish population and the multicultural population of Helsinki combined with the city's major international connections.

The aim of this thesis is to compare the communicative resources found inside Mall of Tripla in Helsinki and Kauppakeskus Valkea in Oulu to achieve a more comprehensive view of the phenomenon of English in Finland, and to see how these regionally different locations utilize foreign languages in their communication. Based on the critique Tripla has received, it is interesting to see whether their language use is actually different from another similar location. In this thesis I intend to showcase the presence of English outside the capital area and expand the overarching attitude that English is only reserved for young Finns in urban cityscapes (see e.g. Kääntä, Leppänen and Nikula, 2008; Leppänen et al., 2011).

1.1 Linguistic Landscapes

Whether a street sign, billboard ad, or a scribbled note on a store window, discourses in *linguistic landscapes* are concrete and unavoidable in residents' everyday lives inevitably shaping their identities (Hult, 2014, p. 510). Seeing everyday signs in our surroundings allow or force us to expand our linguistic repertoires. According to Leppänen et al. (2011, p. 161), people in Finland have increasingly become aware of their linguistic landscapes, but they still do not consider themselves to use English on a daily basis. However, the linguistic constructions on different signs require not only language skills from the reader but cultural knowledge as well which force us to utilize our linguistic repertoires beyond the mundane. By studying which languages are used and how, important sociolinguistic phenomena can be found such as "language ideologies, functional and pragmatic divisions of labor among languages at play and the power dynamics among them" (Lee, 2019, p. 500).

The study of linguistic landscapes has been an emerging field from the 1990s. The main focus has been on signage in major cities around the world especially focusing on textual elements and a division into public and private signs (see e.g. Laundry and Bourhis, 1997). However, there is a growing discussion among the field for a re-evaluation of landscapes and texts to cover virtual spaces, sounds and even buildings (Shohamy and Gorter, 2008). Others also highlight the multimodal features on signs that go hand in hand with text (Scollon and Scollon, 2003). Thus, there is an attempt to go beyond traditional disciplinary borders, and to utilize tools from other fields as well.

Though linguistic landscapes are commonly studied in urban city centers, English's rising status in Finland showcases its presence outside the capital area. Kääntä, Leppänen and Nikula (2008,

p. 425) suggest a need for studying everyday settings by using the theory of linguistic landscapes. Laitinen (2014, p. 74) also highlights a need to concentrate on a range of public spaces that include both urban and rural. This study aims to shed light on more peripheral areas in Finland that inevitably also use English in some shape or another. Laitinen (2014) supports this by reporting findings of English in the linguistic landscape of more rural settings. By examining the linguistic landscapes of Mall of Tripla in Helsinki and Kauppakeskus Valkea in Oulu, this study aims to demonstrate the versatile use of English in Finland outside the capital area and gain a better understanding of how it can be used successfully in a predominantly monolingual country. The research questions are as follows:

1. How is English used in Finnish shopping centers?
2. How do the results from Helsinki and Oulu compare? What do these comparisons say about the expectations of the target audiences?
3. What functions does English have in these linguistic landscapes?

Hypotheses for these questions based on previous research are discussed at the end of Chapter 2.

The data for this study was collected by photographing signs with English language in both shopping centers. Drawing from Gorter (2006), Leeman and Modan (2009), and Vandenbroucke (2016), the data was analyzed for languages found on the signs, types of content communicated in English, and how language appears on the signs which extends the analysis to cover multimodal features alongside textual cues.

I begin this thesis by introducing previous research and key concepts in Chapter 2. The main theoretical base is on linguistic landscapes, but the fields of advertising and globalization are also relevant when discussing such a vastly spread language like English. Chapter 3 offers an introduction of both research sites and a detailed description of the data. This is followed by guiding the reader through the methods of analysis which consists of defining the categorization scheme for the data as well as describing specific tools used to manage the analysis. The results of the study are introduced in Chapter 4 and discussed further in Chapter 5, where I suggest possible explanations for the findings. The study is concluded in Chapter 6 by summarizing the main findings and suggesting further areas of research.

2. Background

Though this study has a strong methodological basis on previous research on linguistic landscapes, discussed in section 2.1, theories from other fields also contribute to the analysis and interpretation of the data. In section 2.2 English is discussed in terms of its global status which extends to theories on advertising in section 2.3. Advertising offers concepts that are crucial to understanding commercial settings, such as shopping centers. Section 2.4 focuses on English and its role as the most important lingua franca in Finland. Finally, at the end of this chapter, I discuss hypotheses for this study based on results from previous research.

2.1 Linguistic Landscapes

Linguistic landscape (LL) is a rather newly established field with first explicit mentions dating back to the 1990s and its first academic journal, *Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal*, being launched only six years ago in 2015 (Carr, 2019, p. 2). Based on scholars' interests and approaches, the field has been called by different names as Scollon and Scollon, for example, refer to it as geosemiotics (2003). Other terms include *linguistic spaces*, *linguistic market*, *multilingual cityscapes* (Gorter, 2006) as well as *semiotic landscapes* (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010). What is common between all these terms is the same multidisciplinary approach commonly drawing from theories to do with anthropology, linguistics, political science and geography among others (Carr, 2019, p. 2). It is important to note that all studies under LL, and other related fields, are also inherently focused on man-made landscapes instead or natural ones.

One of the first theories on LL is from Laundry and Bourhis (1997) who coined the term and are considered to be the forefathers of the field. They define LL as "the visibility and salience on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region" covering language on billboards, street signs and commercial shop signs, for instance (Laundry and Bourhis, 1997, p. 23, 25). This notion is further divided into having an informational and symbolic function (Laundry and Bourhis, 1997, p. 26). The former refers on an LL's role of informing in- and out-groups of the boundaries of a specific region, while the latter function works on a more affective plain allowing an in-group member to feel more included especially in a multilingual setting

(Laundry and Bourhis, 1997, pp. 26-27). In other words, LLs have a major role creating boundaries in society both in a geographical and an ideological sense.

Challenging Laundry and Bourhis's original definition, Gorter (2006), Shohamy and Gorter (2008) and Barni, Rafael and Shohamy (2010) argue for a more multidisciplinary approach and a dynamic outlook on the phenomenon that goes beyond texts on public signs. On one hand, Shohamy and Gorter (2008, p. 2) question the traditional view of the field and discuss the possibility of referring to clothes, sounds or even buildings instead of merely textual elements. The aim of the authors is to push the original definition and explore the possible new connections that can arise between new fields (Shohamy and Gorter, 2008, p. 4). On the other hand, Gorter (2006, p. 1) recognizes a dichotomy in the definition of the term 'landscape' referring to either a concrete space or, on a more abstract level, a depiction of a larger phenomenon that in the case of LL reaches a cultural sphere. This more abstract sphere is pronounced as it captures the dynamic nature of landscapes. This is also brought up in Barni, Rafael and Shohamy (2010) who aim to tease out the social and cultural reality that urban LLs portray.

As one answer to the abstract nature of LL, the concept of geosemiotics was introduced by Scollon and Scollon (2003) who highlight the social meaning behind the placement of signs in physical spaces. Thus, the approach is much like LL but with a more specific focus on interpreting the results further. It is the physical and visual aspects of the signs the authors are concerned with, instead of merely focusing on the linguistic resources found on them as, for instance, a sturdy brass sign signifies stability and longevity, whereas a lightly constructed sign is more likely to signify something temporary (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. 2). The authors use the term *sign* loosely in reference to not only texts but also different kinds of social interactions (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. 13). However, if considering their analysis on language, it is largely focused on written instances on different physical signs that can create indexes to the surrounding area or represent more symbolic values associated with a physically distanced place (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. 119). This is reminiscent of Laundry and Bourhis (1997) who found signs to create distinctions between geographical boundaries and ideological ones.

These symbolic and ideological values have been found in other studies as well. Lee (2019) studied the LLs of two South Korean tourist districts by documenting shop signs related to beauty and food. Lee (2019, p. 501) found that English was mainly utilized for "aesthetic,

symbolic, and promotional purposes" because of connotations with positive values, global power, and ornamental effects. Further studies have focused on the symbolic role of language in LLs in the US. With a more historical approach, Leeman and Modan (2009) found Chinese to be used for symbolic purposes and for its ornamental effect instead of communication in Washington DC's Chinatown. Hult (2014) explored the LL of San Antonio, a city in Texas, and through both quantitative and qualitative methods he found Spanish being used in specific domains and specific neighborhoods. Though native Spanish speaking population outnumbers English speakers in many zip codes and San Antonio is known to have connections to Mexico, English was still found to be the main language of the LL (Hult, 2014, p. 514). Hult (2014, p. 519) argues that this serves a symbolic function above anything else since the US is predominantly English speaking and the ideology of this is reinforced by road signs and billboards in English. LLs thus do not always reflect the actual language use in an area (Hult, 2014, p. 519).

Similarly, Vandenbroucke's (2016, p. 96) discussion recognizes a dual function for language use in a specific space which he refers to as referential or emblematic. The former is concerned with the functional aspect of language choice as it is seen as a vehicle of communication. Thus, English is often found in informational signs since it is so widely known and fulfills the function of informing visitors (Vandenbroucke, 2016, pp. 96-97). The emblematic use of language is reminiscent of the symbolic functions found in Laundry and Bourhis (1997) and Lee (2019), for example. The author describes it as "a vehicle of association" allowing the target product or brand be associated with valuable qualities (Vandenbroucke, 2016, p. 97).

Discussion among LL is also increasingly concerned with globalization and its inevitable effects on LLs around the world. Bolton (2012, p. 32) argues the growing presence of English stems from economic and cultural globalization. He brings up 'Americanization' and how these days English is present everywhere from London to Beijing in place names, road signs and shops (Bolton, 2012, p. 30). Similarly, Gorter (2006) points out the spread of English in Thailand, for example, where English is shaping the development of a variety of Thai. Globalization is also bringing English into the LL of Israel, where it co-exists with Hebrew and Arabic in street signs (Rafael et al., 2006). Even the commonly monolingual Japan shows surprising levels of multilingualism as the presence of English in Tokyo's LL is indisputable (Gorter, 2006, p. 81). Vandenbroucke (2016) on the other hand explores the effects of globalization by focusing on shopping districts in Amsterdam and Brussels. He found midscale locales to appeal to the majority of population with the largest amount of English in the LL,

whereas upscale and downscale locales had more homogenous clientele and the presence of locality in texts was higher (Vandenbroucke, 2016, p. 95). The author suggests globalization has created hybrid spaces that show variation based on the socio-economic status of intended clients which showcases McDonaldization on one hand and the power of the local shaping the effects of the global on the other (Vandenbroucke, 2016, p. 104).

A question rising from this discussion is whether multiculturalism or multilingualism is expressed in LLs as a spectrum of different languages or as the prevalence of English. Barni, Rafael and Shohamy (2010, pp. xviii-xix) argue that in a multicultural setting the LL should in theory reflect this and showcase "particularistic identities". However, the homogenous LL directed towards the majority of people in the midscale locale described above might suggest otherwise and highlight the phenomenon of Americanization or McDonaldization. Vandenbroucke's study can be seen to prove how the most heterogenous group of people might actually live in the most homogenic environment if considering the written language around them. This is just another example of possible inadequacies of traditional LL studies.

As can be seen from the examples cited above, LL research has been largely focused on written language (see e.g. Laundry and Bourhis, 1997; Scollon and Scollon, 2003; Hult, 2014; Vandenbroucke, 2016; Lee, 2019), but recent developments in multimodality have urged LL theories to expand their view to include spaces in the internet and modes of expressions such as spoken language and imagery (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010, p. 2). Shohamy and Gorter (2008) also bring up the technological advancements that challenge the perception of space and physical presence. The same volume also incorporates multimodality into the study of LL and includes sounds, images, and graffiti, for example, as sources of data (Shohamy and Gorter, 2008, p. 4). Multimodality has also been considered in reference to the materiality of signs in Scollon and Scollon (2003). These wider approaches offer a tool that goes beyond what is traditionally considered text. Whether the original sense of LL is adequate in accounting for the linguistic repertoires people are exposed to, is debatable.

2.2 English as a Global Language

Globalization and digitalization have enabled a vast network of instantaneous spread of language across the globe which is evident in studies across disciplinary borders. According to some estimates, one in four people around the world speak English, as second language

speakers are outnumbering the native speakers (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 519). This section discusses the global status of English by describing the Kachruvian model of World Englishes.

The Kachruvian model is one of the main typologies around the English language (Kachru, 1985). The three circles model of World Englishes refers to three differing levels of language contact ranging from the inner circle, where English is spoken as a native language, the outer circle using it as a second language and the expanding circle as a foreign language (Kachru, 1985). Thus, the outer circle includes countries where English has the status of an official language alongside other languages, for example India or Nigeria, and the expanding circle accounts for countries where English is seen as an important language in business, education, or technology, but does not have an official status (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, pp. 519-520). The contact situations that arise within each of the circles, and among them, result in different needs for multilingual communication as language mixing in different forms is integral to bilingual behavior (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 516). For the purpose of this paper, code switching, code mixing, translanguaging, code meshing, and numerous other theories that all refer to distinct forms or language mixing are not discussed separately but rather as the general phenomenon of language mixing. Mixing is often regarded in a negative light and as a sign of language deficit usually stemming from prescriptivist ideals (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006 p. 517). Despite this, advertisers, for example, utilize different levels of language mixing very successfully (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 518).

2.3 Advertising

Language use in advertising can help interpret common ways languages, especially English for instance, are used to appeal to customers and to conveying covert messages by association to values or stereotypes. People around the world come into contact with thousands of advertisements on a daily basis, and with English being the core language of global advertising language contact with major and minor languages is increasingly common (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006; Bhatia and Kathpalia, 2019). Similarly, Li finds English to be in the center of global advertising studies due to variation in its use and great global diversity (Li, 2019, p. 520). English is found to intrude even the most monolingual settings where it might not be a part of everyday communication whatsoever (Bhatia and Kathpalia, 2019, p. 350). In the traditionally

monolingual Japan, for example, English is the primary foreign language in the media (Haarmann, 1989, p. 3). The might of English in this sense is indisputable.

Language mixing allows for a spread of values associated with different languages. One of the first studies examining multilingual advertising comes from Haarmann (1989) who looked at several European languages such as French, English, and Swedish in Japanese advertising. He recognizes prestige associated with all foreign languages, but English above all especially among youth (Haarmann, 1989, p. 4). Languages were also seen to elicit ethno-cultural stereotypes associated with the products they advertised which inevitably directed language choice in advertisements (Haarmann, 1989, p. 10). English was, for example, associated with reliability, high quality, confidence, practicality, and international appreciation, whereas French offered more sophisticated values, elegance, attractiveness, and refined taste. The former was often used to advertise alcohol, cars, technology, or sportswear, while the latter was reserved for advertising fashion, cosmetics, food and furniture (Haarmann, 1989, p.11). Similar results can also be found from European advertisements (see e.g. Kelly-Holmes, 2000).

Not only are ethno-cultural values linked to English, as described above, but more symbolic stereotypes and values can also be recognized. In her study on language contact phenomena in advertising, Piller (2003, p. 170) emphasizes indexes that can be associated with both the products advertised as well as the consumers they are directed towards. She argues that in advertising English is used more for its social stereotype than ethno-cultural values (2003, p. 175). In other words, if compared to other languages such as Finnish, which might be associated with values that are characteristic to Finnish culture, English works on a more general level and symbolizes values such as modernity, progress, and globalization (Piller, 2003, p. 175). The country of origin for the product is redundant in the case of using English in advertising as it already has such strong associations (Piller, 2003, p. 175).

In the study of global advertising, Kachru's three circle model serves as a starting point for many. Focusing on the expanding circle, Androutsopoulos (2013) looks at English in the mediascape of Germany but mentions how the results reflect the situation in other similar European countries as well. By switching focus form "English as lexical structure to English as a discursive resource", Androutsopoulos recognized the phenomenon of "English on top" in reference to the quantity of languages and space, referring to layout on a page, for example (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 210). The approach is focused on the margins of text that are peripheral in the layout such as headings (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 228). The three main

discourse functions of heading, bracketing, and naming show how English is used across media types as a resource for framing (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 234).

Li (2019) argues for a way of looking at advertising in the outer and expanding circles beyond the Kachruvian model, as the author sees it is not adequate in explaining political or ideological reasoning behind the phenomenon. Li (2019, pp. 523-524) continues to discuss the language ideologies that inevitably guide the understanding of English in its specific contexts and urges scholars to look at the underlying political and cultural circumstances. Examples show how English was used to stay connected to a wide international community by using Western place names in real estate advertising (Li, 2019, p. 527). This study on Chinese-English advertising shows how English is "mobilized for negotiating competing discourses by infusing them with local needs" (Li, 2019, p. 526). In other words, English was not only used to connect to the West but also to revive local culture (Li, 2019, p. 529).

Similar dynamics between global and local are discussed in Bhatia and Ritchie (2006) as the paradox of "globalization" and "localization" provoke the prevailing question of whether companies should customize and adapt their advertising to suit individual interests. According to Bhatia and Ritchie (2006), globalization has put an end to this, and advertising is more homogenous than ever. However, different bilingual approaches allow advertisers to accommodate both ends of the spectrum of global and local creating more appealing products (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 515). Language mixing is seen as a vital tool for advertisers to elicit feelings and persuade target audiences by utilizing the socio-psychological functions of English, for example (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 518). They identified six types of English appropriation in global advertising that are *adaptation, double marking and reduplication, hybridization, acronyms and truncation, archaism, and analogical patterning* (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, pp. 539-541). These functions describe different types of interaction between the inner circle English and local languages, allowing for a mix of global and local (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 543).

The structure of advertisements is also sensitive to language mixing, and specific structural domains seem to attract English more than others (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006 p. 526). The authors identify eight domains such as product names, slogans, main body, and headlines, just to name a few, but note that these are not always present nor are they mutually exclusive (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 524). Product naming is recognized as the most salient domain to favor English as even indigenous companies tend to use English in product names targeted towards

indigenous audiences (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 527). Interestingly, however, inner circle English often draws from other languages for product names such as Nokia (Finnish) or Volvo (Latin) (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 527). Similarly, the domain of company names and logos is sensitive to English and abbreviations and acronyms are nearly universally drawn from English (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, p. 527). Contrary to these domains, the body of text, slogans and headers are less common to be seen in English as native languages prevail in providing the most information to the target audiences (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2006, pp. 526-528).

2.4 English in Finland

English is one of the major, if not the major, foreign language in Finland (Leppänen 2007; Leppänen et al. 2011; Moore and Varantola 2018). Its use is pervasive in higher education, and the academic context in general, as well as in business and the corporate world (Moore and Varantola, 2018, p. 149). Some authors also note how English holds a place in the private life, and its role varies tremendously from one context to another (Leppänen, 2007; Leppänen et al., 2011). In this respect, the traditional view of Finland belonging to Kachru's expanding circle is contested as arguments are made for a more dynamic view of English manifesting in Finland (Leppänen, 2007, p. 149). Sometimes considered even more important than Swedish (Kääntä, Leppänen and Nikula, 2008; Leppänen et al., 2011), which holds the status of an official language in Finland, English's significance is undeniable.

The importance of English is examined in the first quantitative study on Finnish people's perceptions of English by Leppänen et al. (2011) who conducted an extensive survey investigating Finnish people's use of English and their attitudes towards it. The survey concentrated on languages and language contact situations in people's personal lives with a strong focus on English and its relationship with Finnish (Leppänen et al., 2011). The overall results showed contrasting levels of proficiency and attitudes in and towards English which most evidently related to age, education, and place of residence (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 64). The language attitudes portrayed by the majority of respondents were positive towards foreign languages, and especially highly educated Finns were open towards learning not only English but other foreign languages as well (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 159). Additionally, 90 per cent of respondents reported studying at least one language with city-dwellers having consistently higher results (Leppänen e al., 2011, pp. 54-55). Unsurprisingly, the most studied foreign

language was English (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 56). However, the seemingly high language competency can be placed on a continuum where on one end people are completely detached from English and on the other have fully embraced it in their daily lives (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 164). The former group of "have-nots" is composed of older population living in the countryside with lower levels of education and manual jobs, whereas the latter group of "have-it-alls" represent the younger population from urban areas who are mostly university educated and have expert level jobs (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 165).

Though a social divide is evident from the data, there is a consensus on the significance of English in people's daily lives. The majority of respondents (78 per cent) were "involved with English in one way or another" and two thirds of the respondents, especially the youth, regarded English to be an important tool for the future (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 156, 164). A lack of language skills was seen as a leading cause of being excluded from job opportunities and other areas of life (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 156). English is thus associated with ideological and instrumental values which ensure the status of English also in the future (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 157). Though many report encountering English at work and consider it a significant tool in working life, the majority still seems to consume most English language content in their free time (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 162). Actual active production of English, whether spoken or written, seems to be less common (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 162).

Basing his research on the quantitative data from Leppänen et al.'s study, Laitinen (2014, p. 56) extended the study of LLs into the Finnish context as he rode a bike from Helsinki to Oulu to see how English is actually present in more rural areas in Finland. He argues that the focus of linguistic landscape studies should not simply be on cities but rather be expanded to a range of spaces that account for peripheral areas (Laitinen, 2014, p. 56). Laitinen (2014, p. 63) found that English was used in even the most rural and remote areas where it was most likely intended for locals instead of possible tourists. Instances of English were also found in glocal mixes where Finnish words were blended with English intertextual clues (Laitinen, 2014, p. 65). His study demonstrates the presence of English in both urban and rural Finland which is why Laitinen urges researchers to look boldly beyond urban cityscapes for data (Laitinen, 2014, p. 74). It also challenges the results from Leppänen et al. (2011, p. 165), who found those residing in the countryside having next to no contact with English.

The blending of local and global has been witnessed in other contexts as well. The popularity of English among youth is not only evident in studying it at school but also through popular

culture such as films, tv and music (Leppänen, 2007, p. 150). By studying the language of youthscapes, Leppänen (2007, p. 166) found differing levels of language mixing varying from random instances of English to deliberate and systematic code switching and even full language shifts from Finnish to English. English is not only needed when navigating the web and mediascapes of today, but it is also an important tool for identity construction and connecting to a larger community (Leppänen 2007, p. 167). Rather than overthrowing Finnish, English is used creatively alongside it as a communicative resource with specific purposes (Leppänen, 2007, p. 167).

Language mixing was also found in other private sphere contexts to create a special in-group language indicating solidarity, for example. A sense of collective identity is discussed in terms of a Finnish football discussion forum where English is more and more common (Kytölä, 2008). Mixtures of English and Finnish are used for humorous and even discriminatory effect, as they create an "inside" language (Kytölä, 2008, p. 268). A similar effect is found in the jargon of skateboarders in skateboarding magazines drawing from Anglo-American tradition but often adopting structural and grammatical characteristics of Finnish (Toriseva, 2008). Variation between Finnish and English is also used to highlight the foreignness of concepts (Toriseva, 2008, p. 293). Altogether English language serves as a basis for jargon that is important in identity construction and the feeling of inclusion in the in-group (Toriseva, 2008). Fandoms and fanfiction are another area where English is often the language of the original material as well as a common language among the fandoms (Leppänen, 2008). However, many have emotional connections to Finnish and would prefer to see it more in fanfiction (Leppänen, 2008).

Moore and Varantola (2018) approach the topic of language contact by exploring different strategies of language mixing and the effects they might have on either of the languages. Some of their data resembles that of LL studies as the authors looked at written instances of English in the main street of Tampere (Moore and Varantola, 2018, p. 134). The authors found sector specific tendencies of using English for its allure and attractiveness (Moore and Varantola, 2018, p. 135). Companies in the field of beauty, sex, gambling, alcohol, and information technology resorted to English in their names more often than others (Moore and Varantola, 2018, p. 135). Though in most cases English was used successfully to attract customers, the data also shows blunders in spelling, grammar, and translations (Moore and Varantola, 2018, p. 136).

Similarly, Paakkinen (2008) reports English having trendy and international connotations in Finnish advertisements which correlates with findings from other contexts around the world (see e.g. Haarmann, 1989; Piller, 2003). English is used for its positive values which advertisers hope gets associated with their products as well (Paakkinen, 2008, p. 321). As Finnish cannot provide products with these indirect connotations, English is often used alongside the national language(s) to add this indirect layer of meaning (Paakkinen, 2008, p. 326). Kääntä, Leppänen and Nikula (2008, p. 423) also found English to have symbolic meaning outside the immediate context that had to do with society, culture, and economy.

The effects of English on Finnish have also been subject to scrutiny due to the fear of language imperialism and dominance of English. Moore and Varantola (2018, p. 150) report numerous effects English has had on the Finnish language in terms of grammatical constructions and vocabulary, but they see these as natural phenomena connected to language contact. Leppänen (2007, p. 150) also rejects concerns associated with increased use of English among youth by suggesting a meaningful hybrid culture is being born in the intersection of local and global. Though there is a discourse around fear and resistance of English, the vast majority of respondents did not consider it as a threat to either of the national languages in Finland (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 159). On the contrary, Leppänen et al. (2011, p. 159) report Finns seeming to be more worried about other languages and cultures getting trodden by English.

Based on these studies English is a not only an important language globally but also on a local sphere in Finland. It is an attractive language for creating group specific jargon but also to provide an added layer of meaning on advertisements and signs. English has an important role as the main lingua franca connecting people from different backgrounds and enabling smooth communication. The same sense of English's functions has been found in multiple LL studies where it can either be used for symbolic purposes or merely as an instrument of informing. These functions can be utilized to create boundaries in society but also to connect to a globalized world. This study is especially focused on this dichotomy and aims to find how English is used in the specific context of shopping centers that combine a commercial setting with an everyday public space. So far people have reported encountering English and recognize it as a part of their linguistic landscapes (Leppänen et al., 2011). To what extent does it just provide important information, or does it provide more value laden content that shapes people's perceptions of the products and spaces it is associated with? What this study aims to do is explore these functions and see how they might be connected to language choice, for example, and especially the choice of English.

My hypotheses for the results of this study are closely linked to the results from previous research. English is expected to be found in both locations similarly to Laitinen (2014), but the results might differ in the sense of language use strategies as the intended audiences are different like he suggests. The comparative approach in this study is also an outcome of a hypothesis that there would be differences in the results. When considering the functions of language choice, previous research seems to have focused more on the symbolic which makes me question whether it is actually more common in LLs or simply more interesting to researchers. Based on my prior familiarity with Tripla, for example, I expect both the symbolic and referential functions to be present. In conclusion, though I expect English to be present in both LLs of this study, one of the motivations for choosing two research sites is to find variation in language use strategies.

3. Materials and Methods

With this study I aim to find out how English is used in written communication in Finnish shopping centers by collecting data from Mall of Tripla, a shopping center in Helsinki, and Kauppakeskus Valkea, a shopping center in Oulu. Though the two cities are very different regarding their geographical locations and population, globalization has affected both which I expect is reflected in the respective linguistic landscapes. Globalization has intensified the role of Oulu as a technological hub with major companies basing their operations there and of Helsinki as a diplomatic stronghold with the major political summit in 2018, for example. In the following sections, I first introduce the two cities and shopping centers in more detail and then describe the data collection process. Finally, there is a detailed description of the methods of analysis applied to the data.

3.1 Research Sites

3.1.1 Helsinki

Helsinki is the capital and largest city of Finland with a population of almost 650 000 in the city and 1,5 million in the greater Helsinki region (City of Helsinki, 2019, p. 8). The city of Helsinki is home to approximately 11 per cent of the whole population of Finland; a trend that has been increasing from the 1990s and is projected to continue doing so into the 2030s (City of Helsinki, 2019, pp. 8-9).

Looking at the demographics of Helsinki reveals a slightly younger and more multicultural population when compared to Finland in general. The largest age group consists of 25–29-year-olds with 40,7 years being the average age in the region compared to 42,9 years as the country average (City of Helsinki, 2019, p. 10). The population is also representative of several ethnicities based on people's mother tongues that include the two national languages Finnish and Swedish as well as Russian, English, Estonian, Somali and Chinese, just to name a few (City of Helsinki, 2019, p. 11). With 16 per cent of the population speaking something other than the national languages in Helsinki, the average for Finland is less than half of that with only 7 per cent (City of Helsinki, 2019, p. 11).

Other noteworthy information of Helsinki has to do with education and employment. 43 per cent of the population achieved the higher education equivalent to a bachelor's degree or higher in one of 11 institutes offering higher education in the Helsinki area (City of Helsinki, 2019, p. 16). In Finland, approximately 30 per cent of the population attend higher education making the Helsinki region the most educated in the country (Official Statistics of Finland, 2020). Equivalently, the average yearly income in Helsinki is approximately 3000 euros higher than in the rest of Finland with many jobs focused in the service sector specializing in market services (City of Helsinki, 2019, p. 19, 26).

With Helsinki's strong focus in market services, it is no surprise the city center has numerous large shopping centers and department stores. The newest, Mall of Tripla, is chosen for further analysis for this study as it is a modern hub in the city linking a major railway station with key connections to the airport and is the biggest mall in Northern Europe (Mall of Tripla, 2021). The name itself suggests international connections as it resembles major shopping centers in surrounding countries such as Mall of Scandinavia in Stockholm Sweden and Mall of Tallinn in Estonia. The location was opened in 2019 and has nearly 250 stores and restaurants within 85 000 square meters offering an array of services to customers either passing by or visiting. Since opening, the shopping center has received backlash in the media due to their perceived excessive use of English (Paananen and Palonen 2019; Rantavaara 2019; Vesikansa 2019). By studying Tripla and comparing it to a regionally different location in Oulu, it is interesting to see if there are major differences in the use of English and if the media's critique is justified.

3.1.2 Oulu

Oulu, sometimes referred to as the capital of Northern Scandinavia, is the fifth largest city of Finland situated approximately 600 kilometers North of Helsinki. It has a busy harbor as well as the second busiest airport in the country (Visit Oulu, n.d.). Oulu has a vibrant city life and connections to the beautiful nature both in the archipelago and the southernmost fell highlands in Finland (Visit Oulu, n.d.). The city is known for its high-tech sector, and it is one of the major technological hubs in Finland.

Oulu is the home to approximately 250 000 people in the greater area, while the population of the city itself is around 205 000 (City of Oulu, 2019). Similarly to Helsinki, the population trend is constantly increasing and has been since the beginning of the 20th century since records have

been kept (City of Oulu, 2020a, p. 22). Approximately half of the population is included in the largest age group of 25–64-year-olds, and the average age is only 38,8 years (City of Oulu, 2020b) which is even lower than that of Helsinki. The ethnicity of the population is very homogenous with 96,9 per cent being Finnish and 3,1 per cent from other ethnicities (City of Oulu, 2020a, p. 29). This is less than half of the country average and approximately five times less than in Helsinki.

Considering the employment in the area, vast majority of jobs fall under the service sector with 34 per cent focusing on public administration and welfare services in addition to jobs in the information technology industry covering approximately 15 per cent of the job market (City of Oulu, 2020a, p. 49). This is reflective of the higher education graduates who most commonly major in medicine or technology (City of Oulu, 2020a, p. 74). The University of Oulu and Oulu University of Applied Sciences offer most of the higher education in the area and had approximately 25 000 enrolled students in 2019 (City of Oulu, 2020a, pp. 73-74). Altogether, a third of Oulu's population has a university degree (City of Oulu, 2019, p. 14). Being a recognized student city, the continuous stream of students helps keep the city young and growing.

Oulu is working hard among different initiatives to develop and gain international recognition and strengthen international ties by increasing the number of jobs, developing the city's digital services, and promoting sustainability (City of Oulu, 2019). The Smart Oulu initiative is looking for innovative solutions in areas from education and technology to real estate and circular economy (Smart City Oulu, n.d.). Oulu is also seeking the title of European Capital of Culture for the year 2026 which is connected to the urban strategy of the city (Oulu 2026, n.d.). Oulu is aiming to become a sustainable growth center in the North with a mix of cutting-edge technology and urban culture (City of Oulu, n.d.).

From the major shopping centers in the area, Kauppakeskus Valkea has the most central location in the heart of the city which is why it is chosen for this study. With approximately 60 stores covering 25 000 square meters, it is the second largest shopping center in the greater Oulu area. The central location is the main reason for choosing Valkea since other options are 10-14 kilometers away from the city center. Furthermore, the central location close to the railway station and busses makes Valkea easily accessible to both the locals and those from out of town. In addition to being easily accessible, Valkea has similar stores and restaurants as

Tripla making comparison slightly easier, though direct parallels are hard to draw due to the sheer difference in size.

Despite the distance between the two cities, it is interesting to compare Oulu to Helsinki as they are more alike than one might think. Especially the younger than average population in both areas is promising for the premise of this study, as English is often associated with the youth. Both cities also have vibrant student life and showcase a similar trend of the prevalence of the service sector in the job market. The multicultural population is where things get interesting since Helsinki has a significantly more heterogenous population than the nearly all-Finnish Oulu. How these differences might be depicted in the data is discussed further in Chapter 5.

3.2 Data

As discussed earlier, linguistic landscapes traditionally study the written linguistic cues that are available in a certain context (see e.g. Laundry and Bourhis 1997; Scollon and Scollon 2003; Vandenbroucke 2016; Lee 2019) which suggest a need for physical data collection. Shopping centers were chosen as the optimal linguistic landscape since they are easily accessible and offer an abundance of data as suggested by Gorter (2006), for example. Additionally, Kääntä, Leppänen and Nikula (2008, p. 425) recommend studying everyday settings to gain the best possible understanding of the effects of English in Finland. What should also be noted is the fact that there seems to be no legislation concerning signage in private and commercial spaces which means that the data in shopping centers is not under any laws that restrict language use.

I emailed both shopping centers beforehand to inform about my research project and to make sure they permit the kind of data collection I was intending to do. Though shopping centers are public spaces allowing photographing, people cannot be recognizable in the background and should be cropped or blurred.

Field work was the most suitable data collection method for this topic as there was no pre-existing datasets that could be utilized, and the data only exists in its physical location. To find out how English is used in these locations, data was collected by photographing instances of English language in the selected shopping centers. The main device was a smartphone from where pictures were transferred onto a computer hard drive. However, in the data collection process pictures were sometimes not taken as there would have been too many people in the

background. Field notes would provide relevant data in this case and describe the needed information.

The data collection occurred in January for both locations which was considered the optimal time right after major holidays at the end of the year but before Valentine's Day and Easter occurring later in the Spring. In November and December, Black Friday and Christmas are important shopping events which might have skewed the data and made results unreliable. With that being said, the sales period after Christmas coincided with the data collection for this study making the data slightly deviant from the ordinary. However, avoiding all special occasions during the year would certainly be a difficult task, and might even prove to be impossible, since their significance to the stores from an economic standpoint is vital.

The data collection in Valkea happened on a Wednesday afternoon during a relatively busy time with people doing shopping and stopping for a bite to eat in the cafes and restaurants. After a day of travelling to get to the location, this was my plan as well. I sat down at a centrally located coffee shop to get a better feel of the space and with the help of a map provided on the shopping center's website located myself on the first floor. As this way my first time visiting the shopping center, the map helped me understand the size of the space behind corners and hallways that extended beyond sight. I started the data collection from the farthest corner on the top floor and proceeded to the lower floors passing by shops, ads and info boxes, photographing approximately 90 individual instances of signs with English. Data collection from Tripla was slightly easier as I live close to it and visit it often. Though I was already familiar with the space and shops, I looked at the map before collecting the data to make sure I did not miss anything. In this location, I started to work my way up from the bottom floor. Because Tripla is significantly larger than Valkea, the data collection yielded approximately 260 English signs. These examples were found on similar surfaces as in Valkea, but Tripla also provided monolingual English naming for different parts of the shopping center that was not present in Valkea. For the most part, however, English was found on advertising, store names, and directions around the shopping centers.

3.3 Methods of Analysis

Drawing from Gorter (2006), Leeman and Modan (2009), and Vandenbroucke (2016) the data was sorted into three main categories. The categories were (1) languages used on signs, (2) types of content communicated in English, and (3) how language appeared on the signs, which extended the analysis to cover multimodal features alongside textual cues. This coding scheme was divided further into subsections which are now introduced.

The analysis began with recognizing all languages appearing on the signs. The first task was separating monolingual English signs from multilingual signs in the dataset. As the dataset focused particularly on signs using English instead of all signs in the shopping centers, the process of language recognition was done largely on-site during data collection to avoid collecting unnecessary data. In ambiguous cases, the pictures were analyzed later and removed from the dataset if necessary. For example, some signs using English loan words such as *smoothiet* 'smoothies' or *e-kirja* 'e-book' were excluded from the final dataset.

Multilingual discourses were recognized when English was used in combination with one or more languages. They were analyzed for translations, either full or partial, or marked just as a language mix when only parts of information were provided in English without translating the text. The quality of the translation was of secondary interest and only relevant in a few cases. Multilingual constructions had full English translations alongside the original texts in Finnish and Swedish, for example, as well as occasional instances of Russian. Language mixes were also recognized between English and Italian or Spanish, for example.

The second main category differentiated between functions of language use, and namely whether English was used for symbolic or referential purposes. The former category relied on symbolic and emblematic values associated with English, while the latter used English to inform or in reference to something. Symbolic value was recognized in constructions without any immediate communicative purpose like "Second Cup", "brands in new hands", and "Sip happens". In ambiguous cases where the function was difficult to define, the main question was whether the English construction added a layer of meaning that a Finnish translation could not provide. If so, the sign was relying on the stereotypes and values associated with English. On the other hand, the referential function was recognized when a sign was clearly put up to inform. English was used in reference to relevant information to the customers, for example, on opening hours or safety measures taken against the ongoing Coronavirus. What should be noted is that

the categories were not mutually exclusive, and an utterance could both draw from the symbolic and referential functions. The dataset had a handful of cases that showed this kind of overlap.

The third main category analyzed how languages appeared on the signs which refers to multimodal features such as layout, font, and materiality. Since the dataset did not include monolingual Finnish signs as a point of contrast, the question of layout and font were analyzed on multilingual signs. This final code in the scheme complemented the analysis of the first two categories and allowed me to make interpretations of the relative importance of the languages that might not otherwise have been so apparent.

To organize the data, I used Adobe Bridge, a media organizing tool, which allows to sort though and organize large amounts of data at a time. I created lists of key words based on the three main categories and added sub-keywords to identify more nuanced features on the signs. For instance, for the first category the main keyword was "languages" with sub-keywords "monolingual English" and "language combinations". The latter was divided further to account for signs with "full translation", "partial translation" and "language mix" (see Figure 1). The whole dataset of 349 pictures was tagged using the key word function. Additional metadata was provided by tagging pictures with the locations they appeared in (Mall of Tripla or Valkea) or other tags pointing out possible important aspects for analysis. For example, an "error" tag was included if there was a notable error in grammar or spelling. Pictures were also color coded to indicate which needed revision to make sorting easier. Once each picture was tagged with all relevant information, the software allowed me to filter based on desired categories or combinations of categories. This was essential to managing the data and being able to draw interpretations from the dataset of 349 individual pictures.

Figure 1 offers an example of the key word structure that was created in Adobe Bridge. The key words appear on the right and by choosing an image on the left, the tags could be applied where necessary. The green markers below the images exemplify color coding that was also applied to the data. Green indicates a fully analyzed picture, whereas red, for example, was used for images that needed revision.

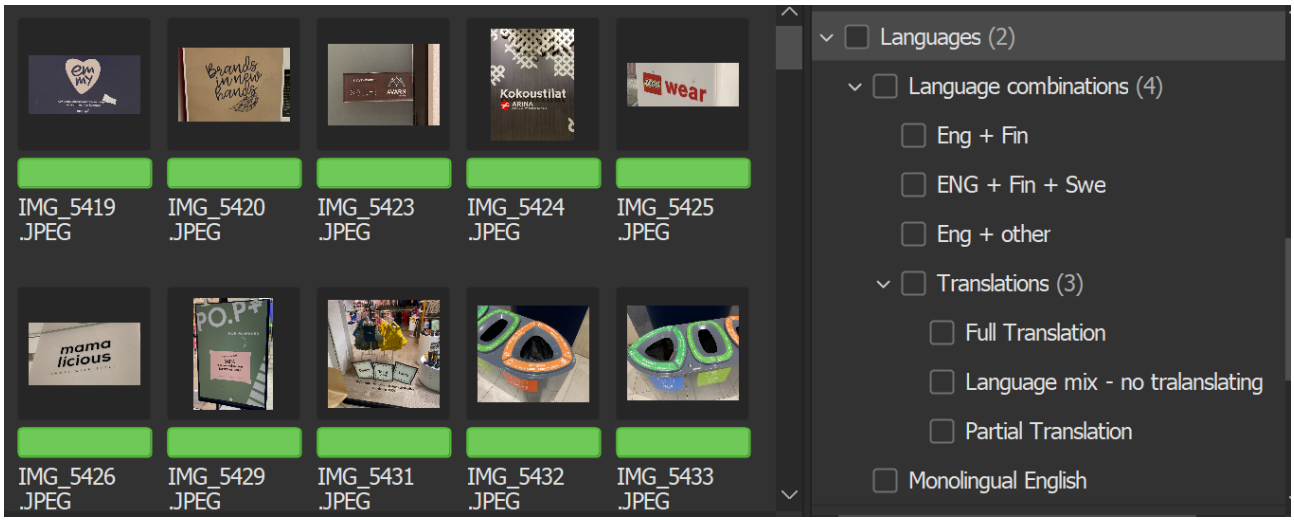


Figure 1. An example of Adobe Bridge's data organization functions.

In conclusion, this study followed the qualitative methods similar to previous LL studies. Typically to the field, data collection was conducted as field work and the data was categorized by criteria considering the languages on the signs and other relevant attributes. However, including two regionally distinct locations as research sites brings a new point of view to the study as it expands the focus from major cities that LL has traditionally had.

4. Results

The analysis of the data is divided into three sections based on the categorization model drawn from Gorter (2006), Leeman and Modan (2009) and Vandenbroucke (2016). Section 4.1 focuses on the languages found on the signs, Section 4.2 on the perceived functions of English, and Section 4.3 examines how language appears on the signs. The analysis covers 349 signs as stated in Table 1. Of these, approximately a quarter were found in Valkea and the rest in Tripla. Images of signs are included in this chapter only to highlight the most important findings, but the complete dataset can be accessed through a link in the Appendix.

Location	No. of signs
Tripla	259
Valkea	90
total	349

Table 1. Number of signs in the dataset.

4.1 Languages on the Signs

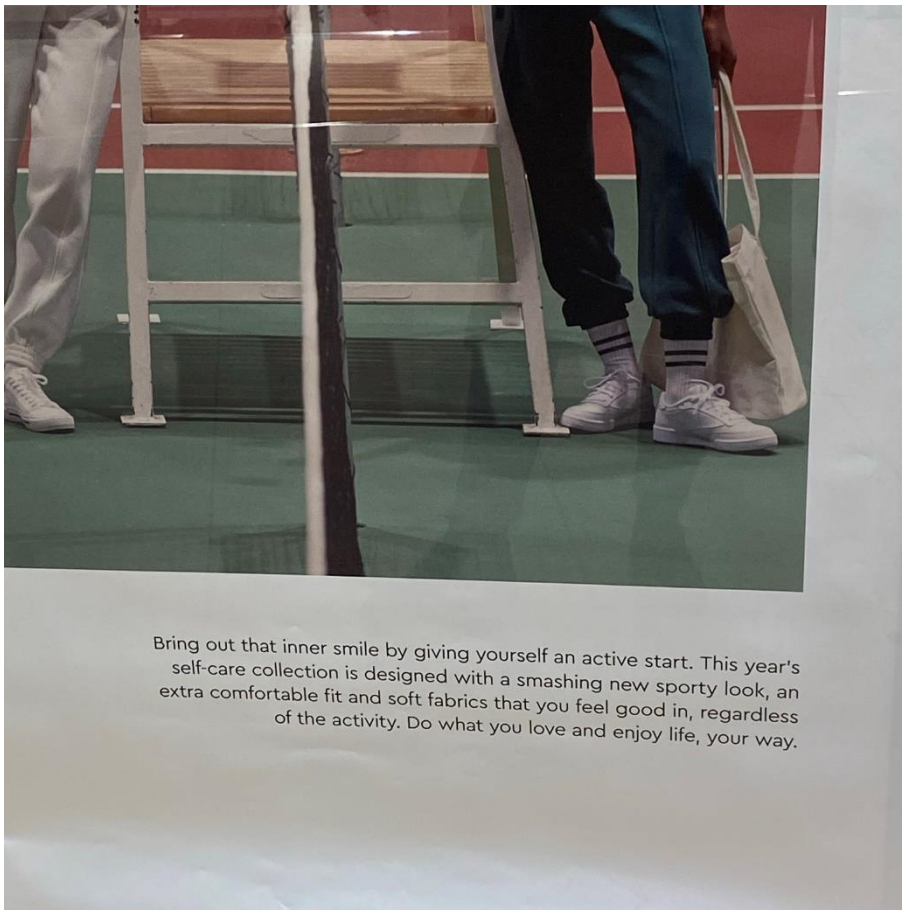
Table 2 shows what languages appeared on the signs. Monolingual English signs accounted for just above half of the whole dataset, while multilingual signs were most commonly combinations of English and Finnish. Though there were some minor differences in percentages between the two locations, the major pattern showed similar trends of how common each language or language combination was.

Location	English		Eng+Fin		Eng+Fin+Swe		Eng+other	
Tripla	130	50,20 %	95	36,70 %	27	10,40 %	13	5,00 %
Valkea	48	53,30 %	33	36,70 %	7	7,80 %	3	3,30 %
total	178	51 %	128	36,70 %	34	9,70 %	16	4,60 %

Table 2. Languages on the signs that include English.

4.1.1 Monolingual Signs in English

The most common signs in the dataset used English as the only linguistic resource. These monolingual instances of English were commonly used in shop and brand names such as “Your Face”, “SuperDry”, and “Jennifer Shoes” and other signs with simple utterances like “new season by Superdry” or “Shop tax free available here”. Though most signs relied on short utterances like those listed here, some shops used longer texts to describe new collections or products, as seen in example 1. Here the clothing store Gina Tricot gives an inviting description of their new collection with a three-sentence paragraph. Though the first and last sentences are rather simple constructions, the second sentence is significantly longer and more complex which requires more effort from the reader. Six monolingual signs with longer paragraphs were found in Tripla, while none in Valkea.



Example 1. Advertisement in the store window of Gina Tricot (Tripla).

An interesting difference was found in the window of the Marimekko store in Tripla and Valkea where a longer paragraph of text was describing Marimekko’s 70-year long journey in design. The monolingual English text in example 2 was found in Tripla, whereas in Oulu the same text

was written in monolingual Finnish, as seen in example 3. Neither store offered any translations trusting their clientele to be proficient in the chosen language. This, and the other signs resorting to complex constructions in monolingual English, is one indication of the difference in the perceived language proficiency in both regions, discussed further in Chapter 5.

Example 2. Store window of Marimekko (Tripla).

Example 3. Store window of Marimekko (Valkea).

Monolingual data also offered references to places associated with English speaking culture like “Down Under” (see example 4) or “Atlanta”, “Little Manhattan” and “Feel Vegas Tripla”. In Li’s study, geographical references were seen as intertextual links to Western culture and global unity (2019). In my dataset, references to English speaking places were only found in Tripla, whereas in Valkea only one sign mentioned a place outside Finland: “Flying Tiger Copenhagen”.

Similar inferences could be made from other signs in Tripla that drew from Anglo-American culture. The naming of floors as “Soul Streets”, “Downtown” and “Nordic Avenue” all refered to different street signs found in the US, for example. However, unlike the examples already discussed, these place references were more vague and relied more on the perceptions of overall Anglo-American culture. Other references came from idiomatic utterances such as “Diamonds

are forever" and "Keep calm and carry on". 'Diamonds are Forever' is an iconic James Bond movie, and the phrase has also been used in many popular culture phenomena. In the context of Tripla, it was used for an advertisement for a liquorice shop. The utterance "keep calm and carry on" is a product of the British propaganda posters during WWII. The phrase has since been modified into other contexts, as could be seen in example 5 from Tripla, which is an ad for a Mexican restaurant stating, "Keep calm and have a burrito".

Example 4. Bottom floor "Down Under" and its services (Tripla).

Example 5. Sign in the window of Tortilla House (Tripla).

English was also used for humor in both locations. Signs in Tripla used puns like “Sip happens!” (see example 6) and “In pizza we crust” which were clear examples of the English language bringing an additional layer of meaning that Finnish alone could not. Other humorous constructions in Tripla included rhymes “Here for the beer” and a comical utterance “dogs welcome humans tolerated”. Similar utterances were encountered in Valkea “hard to eat easy to enjoy”, “selfiemade”, and “hot drinks, hot baristas, hot chef” (see example 7). There was also one instance of irony in Valkea in the case of an upscale clothing store being called “Rags”, that by the name of it, could give people more negative and cheap connotations. All these examples not only required knowledge of English but some also the ability to interpret the specific characteristics of English pronunciation, for example.

Example 6. Advertisement for the restaurant Signor Smith (Tripla).

In my dataset, monolingual English signs were most often used for symbolic functions. Both locations showed parallel results here, as in Valkea 67 per cent (32/48) of all monolingual English signs had a symbolic function and 65 per cent (84/130) of monolingual signs did in Tripla. These sings showed that English was also used in even long stretches of texts and constructions that require, at times, rather advanced language proficiency.

Example 7. Chalkboard sign in front of the cafe La Torrefazione (Valkea).

4.1.2 Multilingual Signs

Location	Full translation		Partial translation		Language mix	
Tripla	56	42,10 %	22	16,50 %	55	41,40 %
Valkea	19	45,20 %	1	2,40 %	22	52,40 %
total	75	43 %	23	13,10 %	77	44,00 %

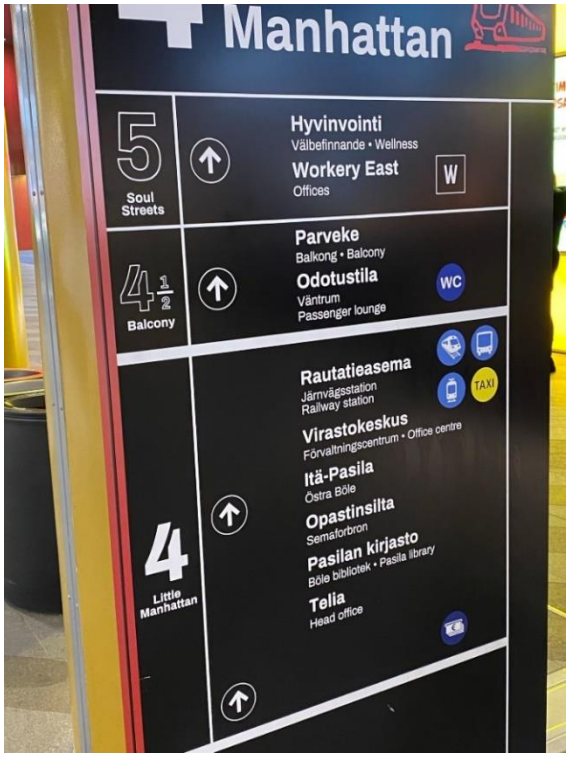
Table 3. Types of language combinations on multilingual signs.

As seen already from Table 2, just under half of the data consisted of multilingual signs where English was used alongside the two national languages, Finnish and Swedish, or other languages such as Russian, Italian, Spanish and Thai. Table 3 describes the types of language combinations that appeared mostly as translations of the same message or as language mixes where multiple linguistic resources were combined but not translated. There were, however, some regional differences in evidence, as translations were noticeably more common in Tripla, while signs in Valkea resorted to language mixing slightly more often.

In just above 40 per cent of multilingual signs, the text consisted of full English translations alongside the original texts in Finnish: “vain asiakkaille, customers only” and both Finnish and Swedish “energiajae, energy waste, energifraktion”. There were also occasional instances of Russian used alongside English, Finnish and Swedish when communicating about the Coronavirus, for example. Thai was also found on one sign as, what I assume, a corresponding text of the translation in English (see example 8). Interestingly, English was only found to be used in combination with Finnish or other foreign languages but never only with Swedish.

While full translations were significantly more common, some partial translations did appear in the dataset as well. In these examples, only parts of the information were translated into English from the main texts in Finnish. Examples left without translations were *autovuokraus* ‘car rental’, *kuluttajatukimus* ‘consumer survey’ and *kauden drinkki* ‘season’s drink’, just to name a few. However, there were also some cases in Tripla where English utterances were not always translated into Finnish, as in example 9. Example 9 shows a directory meant to help guide customers, and, as can be seen, most information is translated from Finnish into Swedish and English. An exception is made with “Workery East – offices” and “Telia – Head office” where the English “explanations” of the places are not translated. Other such examples included not translating utterances such as “Lunch buffet”, “Reservations” and “Stop the spread”.

Example 8. Store window of Bangcok9 (Tripla).



Example 9. Directory of the shopping center (Tripla).

Language mixing was very common in both locations, but slightly more so in Valkea. Mixing was used in shop signs to elaborate on the purpose of the establishment "La Torrefazione – Great coffee, Italian lunch" (see example 14 in section 4.2.2), *Natural – hyvän olon osaaja* 'Natural – expert in wellness', *Sieni – bar & lounge* 'Mushroom – bar & lounge' and *Bakery Manteli* 'Bakery Almond'. English was also used to attract customers with utterances like "Look here!" or "For members" being followed by a Finnish description of a sale, for example. Other constructions worth noting were *kahvia non-stoppina* 'coffee nonstop' and *SS21: kesämuistoja* 'SS21: summer memories' both of which utilized English in a seemingly Finnish utterance. Similarly, English was used in combination with Finnish but to create hybrid forms combining global with local, as discussed in Laitinen (2014). Constructions like "Hairlekiini", "Petrifun", "epicautokoulu", "fotofone" and "EKOenergy" all combine elements of English with Finnish to create a playful effect.

Considering that language mixes often relied on the added value English brought, the symbolic function was, expectedly, the most common amongst them. In Valkea, 95 per cent of all language mixing was symbolic, while in Tripla 71 per cent was. Unsurprisingly, most multilingual signs with translations had referential functions. Including the message in more than one language on the sign suggests that it will be conveyed to the largest possible audience highlighting the informational function. In Tripla, 94 per cent of signs with translations had a referential function, and in Valkea all signs with a translation were referential.

In conclusion, both locations showed parallel trends where the shares of monolingual signs and different language combinations demonstrated significant similarities. The main differences, however, arose in language choice, as Valkea trusted mainly in English monolingual signs and multilingual combinations of English and Finnish. In Tripla, the presence of other languages was slightly more prominent. Additionally, the share of signs with translations and language mixing showed minor differences between Tripla and Valkea where the former used more translations and the latter resorted to language mixes.

4.2 Functions of Language Choice

The functions of English on the signs are divided into referential and symbolic. English can be used either to attract and project a certain image or to function as a vehicle of communication delivering a comprehensible message (Vandenbroucke, 2016, pp. 96-97). The share of these

functions is presented in Table 4. What seems important to note here is the significant amount of overlap in the results, constituting a mismatch in the percentages which is why total amounts per location have not been included. Reasons for the overlap are discussed further at the end of this section.

Location	Referential		Symbolic	
Tripla	152	58,70 %	137	52,90 %
Valkea	34	47,80 %	54	60,00 %
total	195	56 %	191	54,70 %

Table 4. Functions of English in the dataset.

4.2.1 Referential Function

Referential use of English was focused on informing, in other words, providing practical information to as many people as possible. When considering the patterns in the dataset, the signs in Tripla were slightly more common to have referential information on them than those in Valkea. In the whole dataset, however, there were only four more signs with referential information than symbolic.

Example 10. Information on opening hours at the entrance of the shopping center (Tripla).

Signs informed the customers about opening hours “mon-sat 9-21” (see example 10), recycling “energy waste”, “recyclable paper” and security around the shopping centers “guarded”, “recording camera surveillance”, “secureplan”. Advertisements informed the customers about the on-going sale “sale up to 50%” and the possibility to do online shopping “shop online at ginatricot.com”. Other signs offered directions, both to navigate the shopping center “You are here”, “Entrance”, and how to use different services such as smart post or storage lockers. However, one of the richest sources of referential information was provided by communications about the Coronavirus urging people to stay safe and mindful of others “keep a safe distance”, “please keep distance” and “take care of good hand hygiene” (see example 11).

Example 11. Directions to customers about how to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (Valkea).

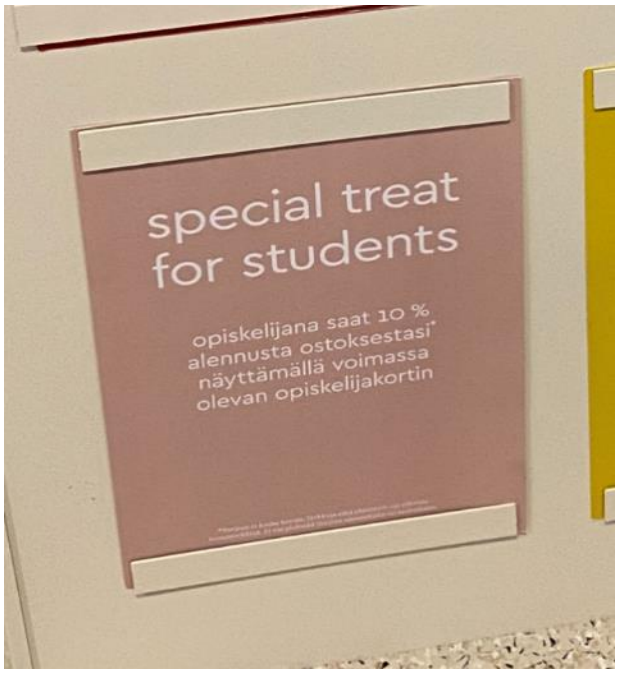
4.2.2 Symbolic Function

Symbolic or emblematic use of English is focused on the positive values and connotations it could provoke in people. English attracts customers and is a tool for the shopping centers as well as individual shop owners to “create a certain image or social stereotype customers want to associate themselves with through buying the advertised commodities and more prestigious lifestyle associated with them” (Piller, 2003). In my dataset, symbolic functions were slightly more common in Valkea than in Tripla and, as mentioned in 4.1.1, appeared most commonly in monolingual signs and multilingual signs that mixed different linguistic resources.

Similarly to Vandenbroucke (2016), English was often used for effect on different modes of expression around the shopping centers. It could be found in shop names like “Second cup”, “Glitter”, and “Your Face” as well as in slogans on store windows like “Happy food store” and “Sport to the people”. One interesting example also used English quite literally to grab the customers’ attention by urging them to look at the sign (see example 12). Here, the attention getter is in English, while the specific service-oriented text is in Finnish. Thus, actual communication about the offer is done in the main language and the foreign language serves only the purpose of attracting. A similar effect is achieved in example 13, where English is the attention getter attracting customers who might not be proficient in Finnish, while the more detailed information about the campaign is expressed in Finnish. Vandenbroucke (2016) also found that service-oriented information was often expressed in the main language of communication which in his study was French or Dutch.

Example 12. Advertisement outside Lindex (Tripla).

Interestingly, a similar type of trend was found on multiple shop signs but with English being the language used for service-oriented information. In my dataset, especially restaurants tended to provide this information in English instead of Finnish. Example 14 is from a café that has an Italian name, but English text was used to elaborate what the café offered. Here English clearly has a symbolic function, as the more logical language for this information would have been Finnish. Still, there is an element of informing customers about the business which would suggest the need to categorize the sign also under the referential function. Thus, there was overlap in the results as well as a discrepancy in the most pragmatic language choice. As discussed in 4.1.1, the choice behind using English on signs is often driven by the stereotypes it represents. While in some cases more detailed, and often referential, information on the signs was expressed in Finnish with English providing the symbolic base, other cases showed a hybrid where English text did both.



Example 13. Advertisement outside Gina Tricot (Valkea).

Example 14. Shop sign of La Torrefazione (Valkea).

However, in the total number of signs that relied on either referential or symbolic use of language, an overlap in the results was noticeable. These two functions in fact had the most overlap in the dataset. Some instances were caused when the same utterance had both informative functions and benefitted from the emblematic use of English, as discussed above in reference to example 14. Other cases were caused by having two separate utterances on the same sign both of which had separate functions, like in example 15. Here the phrase "Let's do lunch" is clearly an attention getter and serves a symbolic purpose, while the lunch hours are an illustration of referential information. In this example, the similar style of using English for service-oriented information (opening hours), as well as grabbing customers' attention, can be noticed.

In conclusion, there were patterns of language use that on one hand relied on the lingua franca status of English and informed customers about an array of things around the shopping centers. On the other hand, English had a strong stylistic presence allowing for the values it brings be associated with stores and products. The two locations, however, showed a slight difference in how the functions were allocated, as Tripla had more signs using the referential function, and Valkea resorted to the symbolic function more often. This was an interesting observation and suggests different perceptions of the main audience's language proficiency, which is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Example 15. Advertisement in the window of restaurant Limone (Tripla).

4.3 Multimodality on Signs

The analysis concerning multimodal aspects on signs was mostly limited to multilingual signs found in the dataset. To make interpretations of how English appears on signs, there needed to be a point of reference for comparison which was only available in multilingual signs that utilized two or more linguistic resources. Additionally, it should be stated that not all signs showed notable patterns of multimodal features, which is why there is no quantitative information for this category as there was for the others. Still, like Androutsopoulos notes, "the design and placement of English resources is part of their discourse function" (2013, p. 215), which arguably highlights the importance of this analysis even though it might not cover the whole dataset.

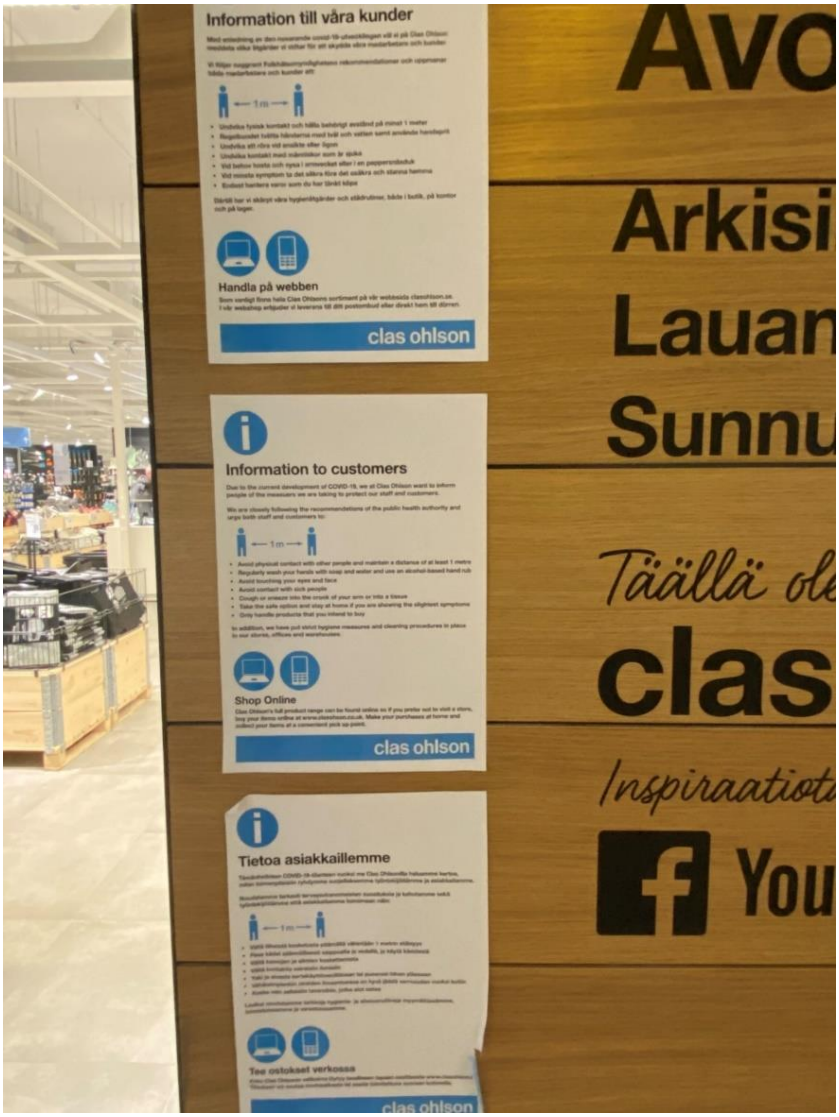
4.3.1 Order of Languages

Scollon and Scollon (2003) suggest that the preferred or primary code is most often located above other secondary codes if the text is aligned vertically. A preferred code may also appear on the left if text is horizontal or even in the center where the periphery of the sign is for the secondary codes (2003, p. 120). This description is congruent with my interpretation that multilingual signs provide the most fruitful analysis for this category.

In my dataset, English was used most commonly together with Finnish, or Finnish and Swedish, on multilingual signs. In nearly all signs where English was presented as a translation of the original text, Finnish was placed as the primary code followed by Swedish and finally English.

Example 16. Instructions on a parking meter (Tripla).

If there were more languages on the sign, they always appeared after English. Example 16 is a parking instruction sign that follows the description provided by Scollon and Scollon. When text is presented vertically, the preferred code is at the top, and when text is presented horizontally, like at the bottom of the sign, the preferred code is on the left. Nearly every sign followed this pattern except for example 17. Example 17 shows how the signs are placed in a peculiar order, as Swedish is at the top and Finnish all the way at the bottom. However, this could be explained by the store's Swedish roots or the clearly temporary nature of the signs. Another deviating pattern was found on a couple of signs where Finnish was followed by English, and Swedish was placed as the least important language. However, these signs were marginal in the whole dataset, which is why their significance is debatable. What seemed most relevant was the general trend that placed an English translation in a secondary or tertiary position depending on whether it appeared just with Finnish or with both Finnish and Swedish.



Example 17. Information about the Coronavirus safety measures in Clash Ohlson (Tripla).

Another pattern in approximately 10 per cent of the signs was what Androutsopoulos called "English on top". He described this as a discourse function in bilingual discourse, where English was used "on top" of the national language to complement it (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 209). In this case, the semantic content of the text would not be as important as the inclusion of English and its placement above the main language of communication. This phenomenon would be found mainly on signs with language mixes instead of full translations as can be seen in examples discussed above, namely in examples 9, 12 and 13. In all these cases, English has a clear discourse function – to attract customers. The symbolic values that the language choices portrayed were heightened by placing English elements on such a salient location on the signs. Thus, the importance of English was not only evident in language choice but also in the layout of the signs.

4.3.2 Font

Font was another tool that helped determine the relationship of the different languages that appeared on the signs and to make interpretations of the perceived importance of languages. Much like the order of languages, the most salient places on signs also tended to have larger and more noticeable fonts which entailed the preferred code.

Example 18. An advertisement for gift cards (Tripla).

In multilingual signs, and especially those with fully translated text, the preferred code was often distinguished from the secondary by a bolder, bigger, or different color font. In example 16 (shown previously) Finnish was written in a bolder font, and the secondary code, in this case English, was italicized, which highlighted the difference between the two languages. The header was also capitalized in the preferred code, creating an even clearer distinction between the two languages. Example 10, discussed in section 4.2.1, showed a similar strategy of italicizing the secondary code. The same effect could also be achieved by using a larger font size for the preferred code. Examples 12 and 13 created the sense of importance by not only placing English in the top position as discussed earlier but also by presenting these utterances in a large font which highlighted their function of attracting customers. Though in most cases the larger font size coincided with the placement on top of secondary codes, example 18 shows quite an interesting deviation. Here, Finnish is placed in the location for preferred code, but English has a larger font size and a more eye-catching color. A tentative explanation for this could come from the salience of English in naming practices in Tripla in general, as all the floors and the shopping center itself had an English name. This does not, however, explain why English was not placed in the primary location on the sign.

4.3.3 Materiality of Signs

Scollon and Scollon (2003) suggest looking at the materiality of signs in addition to the textual elements to gain a more rounded idea of the linguistic landscape. With materiality they refer to either permanence and durability of signs on the one hand, and temporality and newness on the other (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. 135). Though other studies have looked at this in light of public and private signs, in this study I concentrated on patterns deviating from the norm around the shopping centers.

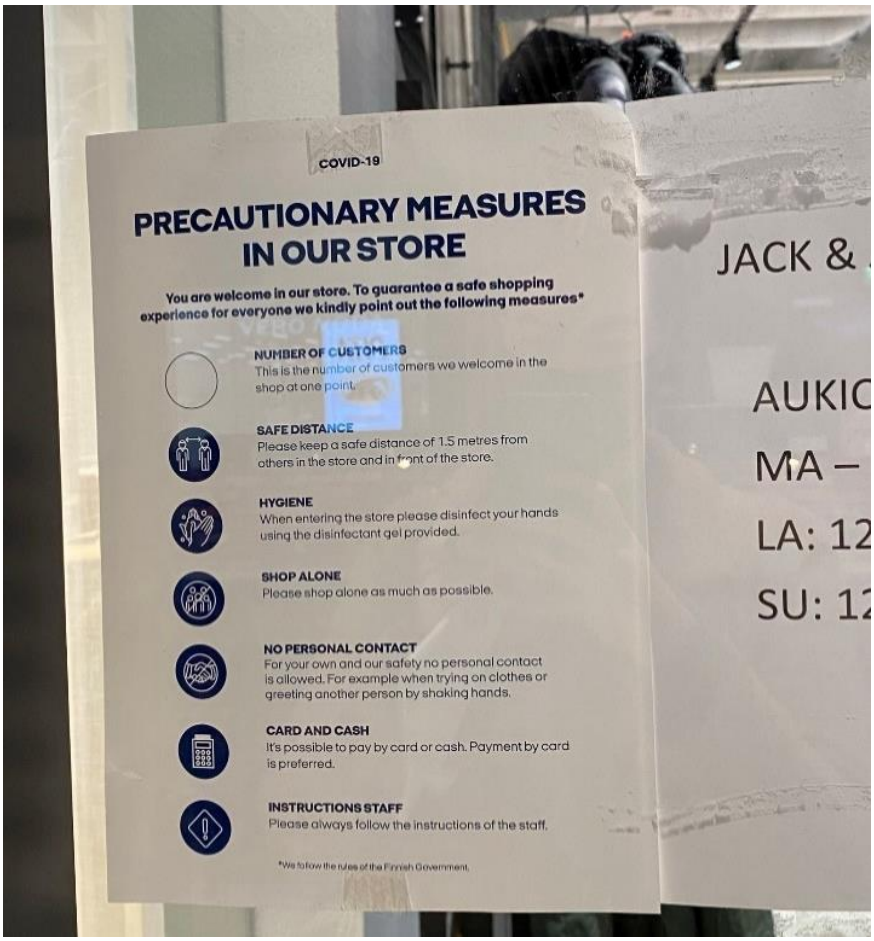
In a shopping center, most communication is commonly done in different kinds of stickers, whether they are on floors, store windows or doors. Other possible materialities are paper or cardboard in the form of different kinds of print ads, for example. Shop signs are usually more sturdy constructions of plastic or metal. Though all these materials can physically be replaced and are in that sense temporary, especially print ads are meant to be replaced every now and then to suit the ongoing campaigns and seasons. Thus, for the purposes of this study, only the signs deviating from the conventional materialities encountered in a shopping center were

analyzed. These included different kinds of paper signs, for example, that were clearly only a temporary way of expressing something.

The first example of such a sign was discussed in section 4.1.2 in relation to multilingual signs. Example 8 draws from three different linguistic resources, Thai and English in addition to Finnish, which is added on a temporary material to the store window. Thai and English were thus not only placed in a preferential position based on their location above and on the left of the Finnish text, but they were also permanent stickers on the window. This might suggest that Finnish was indeed never considered to be a main language of communication here, which highlighted the role of Thai and English.

Further examples of temporary, simple paper signage related to the coronavirus safety measures, as in example 19, or in instructions for customers to mind their surroundings. These kinds of signs (see example 20) were found in both locations signifying a certain area to only be used by customers. Other related signs instructed customers not to touch something or use a different door for entrance, for example. These kinds of temporary signs were slightly more common in Tripla where approximately 25 per cent of all signs used a material similar to these examples. On the contrary, only 16 per cent of signs in Valkea were printed on temporary material. Furthermore, around one third of referential signs in both Tripla and Valkea were presented on a temporary sign, whereas symbolic temporary signs accounted for only 14 per cent in Tripla and 22 per cent in Valkea. Thus referential signs resorted to temporary materialities more often as could be seen from all the examples discussed in this section.

From these results it was apparent that the importance of languages was created using multiple different techniques. Preferred codes were often differentiated using placement on the layout, font size and font type. Language choice was also an important aspect of signage and told a lot about who the intended audience was, and what the shop owner wanted to express and communicate. While monolingual English signs tended to rely on the stereotypes associated with English, multilingual signs showed less clear patterns. Translations were commonly referential in nature providing customers with important information, but language mixes often behaved similarly to monolingual signs. Though differences between the two locations were minor, their implications are discussed further in the following chapter.



Example 19. Precautionary measures against the Coronavirus taken in Jack & Jones (Tripla).

Example 20. Informational sign by the seating area of Jungle Juice Bar (Valkea).

5. Discussion

The results of this study not only prove the vibrant use of English in the capital area, as expected, but also in regionally different Oulu, 600 kilometers away from Helsinki. Similarities in the data were most pronounced in the larger patterns where monolingual English signs were most common in the whole dataset and the division into multilingual signs showed parallel trends. Further similarities were seen in multimodal analysis of signs, and where English signs did appear they tended to follow the same patterns in terms of their appearance. However, the main differences to arise from the data had to do with variation in language combinations and the division between referential and symbolic signs. In Tripla, English was more often used in combination with other languages than just Finnish and relied heavily on the referential function. Valkea, on the other hand, used English more often in simpler combinations, either on its own or just with Finnish to portray symbolic values. It is precisely these differences that form the basis of the discussion in this section, as they are suggestive of not only the perceived language proficiency of audiences but also different strategies of language use that reflect different roles English has in Helsinki and Oulu. In this chapter, I include further examples of symbolic language use and errors on signs that were not introduced in the Results Chapter to enrich the discussion and showcase the different language use strategies.

5.1 English Symbolizing Innovation and Globalization

The symbolic values that English has been associated with in previous research are positive evaluations such as modernity, reliability, confidence, and globalization (Haarmann, 1989; Piller, 2003). In the Finnish context, Paakkinen (2008), for example, talks about the added layer of meaning English brings into Finnish advertisements. Kääntä, Leppänen and Nikula (2008) also found English to have symbolic meaning outside the immediate context.

Language mixes found in the dataset were commonly using English for symbolic purposes, which is congruent with Haarmann (1989) who notes how mixing languages allows for a spread of values different languages hold. Bhatia and Ritchie (2006) also recognize language mixing as an important tool for advertisers to connect local with global to create more customized and targeted content. They describe six language mixing strategies in global advertising of which especially adaptation and hybridization can be found in my data. Adaptation refers to a

phenomenon where English language rules are violated to create an innovative utterance, like "fotofone" or "fonum", which bend English spelling conventions to match Finnish pronunciation. Other utterances bending "standard" language rules include examples like "urban rabbit", "festive berry" and "living lobby" all of which utilize personification to describe the concepts. Hybridization was also encountered in my dataset with utterances like "hairlekiini" and "EKOenergy" where a compounding process draws from both Finnish and English codes. Additionally, there was one example of analogical patterning found in Tripla where offices being called "Workery" – a place for work – draws from the more common concept of "eatery" – a place to eat. Some of these examples could also be discussed in reference to glocal mixes, as described by Laitinen (2014). The main idea is that language mixing allows for unconventional and innovative communication strategies that can bend the rules of standard language and create new forms that are meaningful in the target context.

Languages have been found to not only spread and elicit values, but also ethno-cultural stereotypes which Haarmann (1989) finds to be a strong motivation in language choice. Li (2019) discusses how English is a way to connect to the West which is evident in the references to Anglo-American culture found in the dataset. Laitinen (2014, p. 67) also discusses meaning creation on signs relying on Anglo-American popular culture. This was especially common in Tripla, where mentions included places like "Down Under" and "Vegas" and other common street signs like "avenue" and "downtown". Creating these links on the global level, and more specifically to English speaking locations, allows for Tripla to get associated with large metropolises around the world. The hustle and bustle of something like downtown New York is reflected onto Tripla as a major hub in Helsinki connecting people from all over Finland and even the world. The example of "Down Under" is not only clever word play as it is located in the bottom floor of the shopping center, but the establishments located on the said floor provide customers with a laid-back beach milieu that is often the stereotype associated with Australia or "Down Under". Similarly, the sports bar "Feel Vegas Tripla" brings the mecca of gambling to Helsinki by drawing from the stereotypes commonly associated with Las Vegas and its vibrant gambling scene. Tripla has used these stereotypes to add a layer of meaning to their services creating connotations that the Finnish language could not have done.

With these stereotypes, there is also a larger phenomenon of Americanization evident in Tripla. Not only were the place references more commonly to locations in the US, but also the vocabulary around the shopping center was American rather than British. Using "mall" instead of "shopping center", "elevator" instead of "lift", "ATM" instead of "cash machine" or

"shopping cart" instead of "shopping trolley" all highlight the American values Tripla wants to be associated with.

Tripla received criticism for their naming practices in 2019 when multiple articles were published about the "ridiculousness" of the shopping center's English names. Paananen and Palonen (2019), for example, suggested Finnish translations for the English names to avoid the involuntary comic effect they had created. Vesikansa (2019) went as far as to question the status of Finnish as a language of science and is worried about the effects the increasing amount of anglicisms have now that the new shopping center has been given such a "monstrous" name. What all the criticism has in common is the oversight of the symbolic meanings the words choices portray. *Humppakatu* 'jazz street', the substitute suggested for "Soul Streets" by Paananen and Palonen (2019), is not able to portray the same values the English counterpart does. In fact, the connotations it brings up are quite the opposite to the busy streets in New York, for example. Though the main motivation behind the English names has been an international audience and appeal (Rantavaara, 2019; Paananen and Palonen, 2019), the word choices in fact do more than that. As discussed previously, English language has a different effect, and it can transport customers and visitors to the other side of the planet with the ethno-cultural stereotypes it holds.

What is especially interesting, is the stronger presence of symbolic language use in Valkea than in Tripla, but still the former has not received similar criticism as Tripla has. However, the types of signs and their salience in the linguistic landscapes show different patterns. Valkea's symbolic functions were mainly on shop names and their slogans which are rather common places for such language use, compared to Tripla that included English in more visible places like its name. Why Valkea, and other shopping centers for that matter, have not received similar backlash as Tripla could stem from their more conventional language use.

In terms of linguistic landscapes, the symbolic function was already recognized in Laundry and Bourhis's (1997) seminal work where they define it as the affective plain of signs working towards the *feeling* of inclusion (my emphasis). Lee (2019) found English also to be used for aesthetic purposes. Similarly, Leeman and Modan (2009) found the symbolic language use to prevail over referential. Leeman and Modan (2009) and Vandenbroucke (2016) suggest English being used for the most commercial information on a sign. In my dataset, this could be analyzed in partial translations and language mixes where clear decisions had been made on what to communicate in which language. In the examples discussed in 4.1.2, this is noticeable in most

cases, but instances like “Kahvia non-stoppina” or “Petrifun” are more ambiguous as the choice of English is not necessarily as apparent as in “epicautokoulu”, for example. It is also worth pointing out that English language is considered to represent economic success which would support why it is used in even the simplest cases like “Bakery Manteli” that could have easily been expressed in Finnish as well. This is, again, in support of the symbolic function English holds, as it is considered to express meanings and values other languages cannot.

5.2 Informing in English – The Major Lingua Franca

Referential use of English is aimed to provide service-oriented information to customers proficient in English (Vandenbroucke, 2016, p. 97). This informational function was also brough up in Laundry and Bourhis (1997) where the definition was concerned with creating boundaries for in- and out-groups in a specific region. Many LL studies since have also used the dichotomy of referential and symbolic where the former has a vehicular role of conveying informational content. In the Finnish context, English is similarly associated with instrumental values (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 157). Taavitsainen and Pahta (2008, p. 37) also found English to be used for “communicative purposes” which corresponds with the referential function found in this study.

Similarly to Vandenbroucke (2016), for example, the referential function was found on signs communicating opening hours and other relevant information that helps customers in service encounters. In the context of Finland, this kind of use of English could be seen to stem form its strong lingua franca status which supports the strong presence of the referential function in the dataset. Taavitsainen and Pahta (2008) also note that with native English speakers accounting for less than one per cent of the population, the language’s presence has no relation to the number of its native speakers living in Finland. As discussed in Chapter 3, the diversity of people living both in Helsinki and Oulu cover numerous distinct mother tongues and ethnicities, demonstrating a need for a lingua franca to provide understandable communication to people without a common language. Leppänen et al. (2011, p. 158) also recognize “a heightened need for a vehicular language” that would enable communication where a shared code would not otherwise exist. Vandenbroucke (2016, p. 98) argues that using English as a lingua franca for referential purposes “indirectly generates economic profit as it enables communication with prospective clients”. He highlights acquiring new customers who are not proficient in the

majority language of the area. The strong presence of the referential function in multilingual signs, and especially translations, found in this study is directly linked to this and offers a tool for the shops to reach as many people as possible.

Further evidence of the lingua franca status English holds in Helsinki comes in the form of errors in translations or grammar. In the whole dataset, altogether nine signs had an error with eight of them in Tripla and only one in Valkea. Though not a significant amount considering the whole dataset, it is an interesting observation as Helsinki is allegedly the home to the most educated population in the country, meaning that exposure to language studies is vast. Errors on signs were either spelling mistakes "hollidays" or grammatical "Robbery and burglary pointless!", "Please notify a safe distance" or "Real taste of Chinese restaurant". As a lingua franca is normally used by people with a foreign mother tongue – which is a considerably larger amount of population in Helsinki than Oulu – especially grammatical mistakes are often less important than conveying an understandable message. This could explain why there appears to be errors in the first place but also why they have not been corrected.

Still, the most important aspect to consider is whether English is the most pragmatic language choice. Scollon and Scollon (2003, pp. 123-24) highlight how the preference of English represents strong values and ideologies as it does not correspond with the most pragmatic language choice. In this sense, it is always a symbolic choice to opt for a language that does not enjoy an official status in the society—which in Finland would arguably be Finnish or Swedish. However, the above than average multicultural population in Helsinki could justify English used as a lingua franca. Additionally, the informative nature of referential signs would correspond with a lingua franca's goal of providing mutually intelligible communication.

5.3 Language Proficiency in Helsinki, Oulu, and Finland

Though in the whole dataset referential signs appeared in nearly equivalent numbers with symbolic signs, there were differences regarding the two locations. While Valkea had more symbolic signs, the referential function of English was highlighted in Tripla. What these differences suggest are distinct language use strategies. Tripla is more reliant on the lingua franca status of English, whereas Valkea chose English for its supposed attractiveness. This could be seen as an indication of the perceived language proficiency of the intended audiences.

Laitinen (2014, pp. 54-55) argues for the audience's capability to understand "proposed meanings" on signs. In other words, for a sign to be informative, it has to be understood by the target audience meaning that the use of English on referential signs indicates the audience's capability, or at least perceived capability, of understanding the message. Using English for the symbolic function does not require similar proficiency, as it draws from the values the language holds which are more easily conveyed than the linguistic content. Stereotypes and values can be communicated without understanding the text itself. This might suggest that the intended audience in Valkea, and Oulu for that matter, is not considered to be as proficient in English as people in Helsinki would be.

Another suggestion of the language gap could stem from the length and complexity of texts found in the shopping centers. Six signs in Tripla used longer paragraphs of English without translating the text into Finnish or Swedish, whereas in Valkea there were no monolingual English signs that had long paragraphs of text. These choices reflect what the audience is considered to be able to understand in each location. In Tripla Helsinki, customers are expected to know English well enough to digest longer, complex stretches of text, whereas in Valkea Oulu, Finnish would be the language of choice.

Taavitsainen and Pahta (2008, p. 37) suggest that using English in complex constructions indicates a move "from a foreign language to a second language resource used in public discourse". If this were indeed true, it would mean Finland is transitioning from an expanding circle country to the outer circle according to the Kachruvian model (Kachru, 1985). Leppänen (2007, p. 149) also argues for a redefinition of Finland's position in the model, as English has a versatile role in people's lives both privately and publicly. The results from this study suggest the importance of English might even surpass that of Swedish, the second official language of Finland, as approximately 85 per cent of the gathered data was either monolingual English or a combination of Finnish and English. Signs including Swedish were only a tenth of the whole dataset. Leppänen et al. (2011) found similar results in their study on language attitudes, where English was found to be the main foreign language for Finnish people. Similarly, it was also considered to be more important than Swedish (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 161).

In summary, it is evident that the importance of English does not stop in the capital area. In both Oulu and Helsinki, the majority of the data consisted of monolingual English signs which means its salience on signage is clear. The inclusion of English in these everyday settings suggests a certain level of language skills that every citizen is expected to have. The relationship

between regional differences and language use has been discussed in Leppänen et al. (2011, p.69), for example, who found that people from rural areas reported lower numbers of encounters with English than city-dwellers. People residing in the countryside were also found to be less educated and did not report as high results in foreign language proficiency (Leppänen et al., 2011, p. 63). The definition of countryside can be attested, and whether or not Oulu could be included under that definition is debatable. Still, Oulu does differ greatly from Helsinki as an urban center. Based on this distinction between the two areas, English has established a vibrant presence outside the capital area and is a part of a more rural landscape as well. Laitinen (2014, p. 74) also found English to "enjoy high visibility in both urban and rural areas of the country". However, the study by Leppänen et al. (2011) is already ten years old, and language attitudes and use has been bound to change in recent years. While ten years ago English might not have been such a visible part of rural LLs, making interpretations *today* requires fresh data to account for the current situation.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Though it may be up to date, the data in this study still benefits from critical evaluation. The formation of the final dataset was in flux during the whole research project, and if I were to go through the process again some changes would have to be made to get a consistent dataset. As Valkea and Tripla are both situated in larger building complexes, it was difficult to find the definitive borders of each respective shopping center and decide which signs to include. Another shortcoming in the process was the physical distance to Oulu since I was not able to visit the site again to double check my findings or complete possible gaps in the data. In the case where some areas in Valkea were left out, I continued along the same lines in Tripla and excluded those locations. This means that in both shopping centers there might have been more data to cover. There could also have been signs that were out of sight or so remotely placed that they did not catch my eye. More careful planning of the data collection, and possibly multiple visits to the shopping centers, could have been useful to get a more reliable and comprehensive dataset.

Only collecting signs with English could also be seen as a rather narrow approach. Though it allowed me to find different ways the said language is used, there is no way of knowing how significant English signs are in the whole LLs. By putting a special focus on English, its

importance became heightened which might have resulted in interpretations that are not relevant in the bigger picture.

Not only is the data collection process subject to the researcher's own abilities, but the interpretation of the results is under the same influence. Both Leeman and Modan (2009) and Vandenbroucke (2016) note the perception-dependent nature of the introduced distinction between referential and symbolic. A reader who is not proficient in English might interpret all English signs as symbolic, whereas someone with higher proficiency might arrive to an opposite reading. My interpretations of these signs are thus to a certain extent subjective and another researcher might arrive at different conclusions based on the same dataset. To avoid this weakness, the study plan would have to be modified to either account for many researchers' evaluations of the signs or a different kind of categorization model should be adopted that is not as perception dependent.

Though there were no human participants in this study, and ethics do not need to be considered in light of anyone's anonymity, for example, ethical research practice is still relevant. The subjective nature of qualitative studies is often criticized, and, in this study, I have aimed to provide as detailed description of the different thought processes as possible. Data collection and categorization were done in relation to specific guidelines which were applied to the data as thoroughly and consistently as possible. Additionally, none of the images in the dataset show people. Another consideration concerns the replicability of the study. Though the data collection process can be repeated, the data is always going to be different as the communication around shopping centers is highly dependent on seasonality. With communication medias changing rapidly, the results of further studies might provide different results.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to provide a first study of its kind in the context of Finnish shopping centers to offer information on the commercial linguistic landscapes of Helsinki and Oulu. As hypothesized, the results showed how English is an important language of communication in both locations, thus, demonstrating its presence outside the capital area. Though there was a certain level of similarities in the results, there are different language use strategies used in each research location which supports the original plan of studying two regionally distinct shopping centers.

The results provided answers to all three of my research questions. English was used most often on its own in monolingual signs, but when used in combination with other languages it appeared in a secondary position to Finnish. In this regard, the results from Helsinki and Oulu showed similar trends, but differences arose in the allocation between language functions. Tripla and Valkea showed different strategies of language use where the former highlighted the informative, lingua franca status of English and the latter more its symbolic side. Thus, English not only served informative and pragmatic purposes but also portrayed symbolic and ethno-cultural values that got associated with shops and products. The latter are more easily conveyed since they only require the reader to recognize the language on the sign, whereas the referential signs need to be fully understood for the reader to be able to grasp the information the sign provides. The distinction of these two functions, and the language strategies they portray, could be seen to suggest different levels of language proficiency in the areas around Helsinki and Oulu.

Symbolic signs tended to convey the attractiveness of English by placing it on a salient position on a sign or using humor or hybrid language mixes to create more playful phrases. Ethno-cultural stereotypes were an important part of Tripla's LL and indicated the desire of being associated with the American culture. Though referential signs were more mundane both in terms of content and language use strategies, this study has showed their strong presence in Finnish commercial LLs. The previous LL research discussed in Chapter 2 tended to highlight the symbolic findings but based on my results referential signs can also provide useful and valuable interpretations of the population.

With this study I aimed to present a slightly wider approach to the study of LLs, as proposed in Shohamy and Gorter (2008) and Barni, Rafael and Shohamy (2010), by providing an analysis

that goes beyond the textual elements and considers the multimodal features that contribute to the overall linguistic landscape and the meanings of signs. By adopting this wider approach, I have been able to answer my research questions more thoroughly and make wider suggestions of the perceived language proficiency of the target audiences in Helsinki and Oulu. The results found in this study are a valuable starting point to anyone wanting to explore Finnish, or other, commercial LLs.

However, what has become evident to me along the research process is the need to investigate the LLs from the perspective of *all* languages that appear in these spaces. There is a need for further research that takes the whole LL into consideration. This way more solid interpretations can be made from the importance of English but also equally of other languages that appear in these locations.

By taking into consideration the scope of this master's thesis, the interpretations drawn from the data should be taken with a grain of salt. The dataset used for this study was by no means representative of the commercial LLs of the whole country of Finland and choosing a city like Oulu to represent the "countryside" can be questioned. Furthermore, LLs do not always reflect actual language use in specific locations (Hult, 2014, p. 519), which is especially important to remember. The results of this study are not representations of the real language use and communicative situations people might encounter, but more so can be seen as a representation of the visual elements affecting people's linguistic repertoires. Similarly, the suggestions I have made about the language proficiency in these areas show what people are *perceived* to know, not what their actual language skills are. In this sense, stereotypes that might be associated with regionally distinct locations seem to shape the LLs more than real language use. To confirm the suggestions about language proficiency and language use strategies I have presented, more detailed and large-scale studies are needed in the future.

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Appendix

Link to the Dataset.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rIJJM8BNfTvMQR593zc6lc3RjBPiIxEH?usp=sharing